

It was always you, Will Byers by RetroDisaster

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Summary:

It takes time, so much time, but eventually Mike Wheeler realises the answer was staring him right in the face all along.

It was always you, Will Byers

Author's Note:

A kinda short Byler fic (that I couldn't be bothered to split into chapters so I'm gonna post it all in one go) I wrote this about a month or so ago while in a car so its kinda mediocre and the pace is fairly quick but whatever, its a filler while the next chapter of snowbaz is being written.

"Byers!"

Will would never forget that moment, as long as he lived. Mike, bursting through the doors of his little hospital room, and hugging him, almost with a sense of desperation.

"I missed you so much" Will whispered. "I missed you too" he replied, smiling softly, "never ever leave again."

At that moment, and just for a moment, Will felt truly content.

"Hey do we get hugs or what?" Dustin chuckled. He laughed as he hugged Lucas and Dustin in turn as well. "I'm so glad to be back" Will said sitting up a little and grinning. He thought, that finally things could go back to normal. Boy was he wrong.

For about two weeks afterwards, the boys bombarded him with all the stories of their adventures while he wasn't there. They told him about the demogorgon and Hawkins lab. But most of all they spoke about this girl; Eleven.

Dustin and Lucas dropped the subject after a while, but it had been almost 7 months since he got back and still barely a day went past that Mike didn't mention her. He spoke about her with such fondness, such such gentleness, whereas with Dustin and Lucas it was more in awe. Will wondered why he felt a pang in his heart every time Mike brought her up. It was never like that with Dustin and Lucas.

One day, he'd had enough. He was at Mikes for a sleepover, like he did most Saturdays. The evening had started out pretty well. They'd

watched star wars, and played board games and chatted about normal nerdy stuff. For a moment, it was just like it used to be. Until everything took a turn for the worst. The very worst.

Mike started talking about El again which Will had anticipated, but he soon realised that a rosy blush had spread up Mike's cheeks and he began to stutter. "I-i uh, i kissed her, Will."

That was the moment that Will realised he was in love, completely and utterly in love, with Mike Wheeler. It was also the moment that he completely lost it.

"WELL?" he shouted. "WHAT DO YOU WANT, A CONGRATULATIONS?" Mike stared at him, open-mouthed. "I'M HAPPY YOU AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND HAD A LOVELY LITTLE ADVENTURE WHILE I WAS ROTTING TO DEATH IN THE UPSIDE DOWN" Mike tried to interject but Will wasn't done. "AND IM GLAD THAT YOU FEEL THE NEED TO BRING IT UP EVERY. SINGLE. DAY, WHILE I HAVE TO PRETEND THAT I'M NOT DYING INSIDE"

There were tears rolling down Will's cheeks. "Will, I" Mike started, but Will shook his head. "I need to go home."

Almost a week went by and Will didn't see anyone. Apparently Mike had called every day, but Will always told his Mum to send him away, no matter how much it broke his heart. One day, however, Mike wasn't having it anymore. He was prepared for Joyce to send him away apologetically, like normal, which she did, but instead of going home, he went round to Will's window and tapped on it gently.

Will's head snapped around and his eyes widened as he saw Mike. He hurried over to his window and flung it open.

"What are you doing here?" He hissed. Mike coughed awkwardly. "I came to apologise".

Will helped him through the window and Mike continued to speak. "I had no idea you felt like that, i'm stupid really" he sighed and looked at the floor. "It should have been obvious from the start, im so SELFISH DAMNNIT" He kicked Will's bedpost in anger. "Im so sorry Will, you're my best friend, I never want to lose you again"

Will blinked back tears a little and he smiled at Mike. "Im sorry, I shouldn't have lost it at you" Will replied. "I guess I was just annoyed that I had to be stuck in the upside down"

It wasn't the complete truth, but it was halfway there. Mike reached over and hugged Will. "I should probably go my mom'll be worried about me" Will smiled. "See you at school tomorrow" Mike smiled back "See you at school".

The next few months went by in a horrifying blur, for Will. He felt as though Mike was the only bit of sanity that remained. Mike was always there to talk to him, to hug him when he was scared. Even when the shadow monster had almost pushed Will out of his own body entirely, Mike was there. The thought of Mike talking to him about all their memories together still haunted him to this day. He wanted nothing more than to reach out, hug him, wipe away his tears, tell him that his Will was still inside somewhere. But he couldn't. It was as though the Shadow Monster had constructed a wall in his mind that stopped him. When he opened his mouth to speak, the words he said weren't his own; they were bitter and cruel and demanding. He still hadn't forgotten what it felt like, and he hated it.

It was also the night, that Eleven returned. Mike remembered it so vividly. It had played with his emotions so much that he barely knew what to do. He was already worried sick about Will, he had prepared himself for the end of the world, and in the midst of it all, El had come back out of nowhere. It was just too much for him. Maybe that's why he lashed out at Hopper.

Besides all that, something felt off with Eleven. He ran straight to her when she arrived, craving that electricity he once experienced, when he hugged her, but it never came. His emotions were totally whack after everything though. Those feelings would return, right? Surely.

It was the night of the Snow Ball. Will giggled as he danced with his Mother, and rolled his eyes at Jonathan, who was of course filming everything.

"C'mon we gotta get going" "You look so handsome baby" Joyce whispered, ruffling her sons hair.

"Hey don't mess it up" he cried back, laughing.

Mike ran his hand through his hair for the hundredth time. He doubted El would even show, so why was he so worried about his appearance? He didn't care about any of the girls at his school, and the only people he'd be hanging with would be Dustin, Lucas and Will. Oh, and maybe Max.

Mike sighed at that. She was ok, he guessed, but, there was something about her. He shook the feeling off and walked downstairs to get in the car. Will jumped out his Mum's car and waved her goodbye. "I'll be right out here the whole time sweetie!" Will rolled his eyes. "I'm literally going to the school dance, mom" Joyce smiled, but there was a sadness behind it. "I just want to make sure that you're, safe, after everything" Will nodded. He understood. "See you later!" He called, taking a deep breath and walking into the sea of people.

He scanned the room for his friends and soon spotted Max, Lucas and Mike milling around by the punch table. "Hey guys!" He said, grinning. He was greeted with a round of "Hello's" in return. He noticed Mike seemed a little distant but he decided to think nothing of it.

He was pulled from his thoughts by the arrival of Dustin. He looked up to greet his friend and couldn't help but to snort at his hair. "Hey!" Dustin cried, hurt. "Do you know how long this took?" He asked, but he was smiling.

Will couldn't help but notice that Mike seemed to be stealing glances at him. Did he look weird? He was so wrapped up in his thoughts that he didn't even notice Max drag Lucas out on to the dance floor. He wished Mike would ask him to dance; gently take his hand and lead him out.

"Hey zombie boy, wanna dance?" Will frowned, Mike never called him zombie boy. He felt Mike slap him on the arm gently, and then a little harder. Will looked up in a daze. He was looking at the face of a pretty girl in his art class. She wasn't Mike, though.

"So? Do you want to dance or what?" She asked again. "I, uhm, well"

he stuttered looking up at Mike. He didn't really want to leave him, but Mike gave him that stare and mouthed "GO". Will nodded at the girl, "yeah ok" he agreed, even though he didn't really want to.

Mike looked up to talk to Dustin, but Dustin had already gone. He sighed, a little bored. He didn't even know why he came to be honest.

That's when it happened.

He saw Eleven open the door, timidly, clearly searching for him. He waved uncertainly, and she came straight over. Mike didn't know what to do, he had to say something!

"You look beautiful" he blurted out. It wasn't a lie, she did look really pretty. "Do you want to dance?" He asked, at a loss. Eleven looked a little scared. "I-i don't know how" she said quietly, "neither do I" replied Mike, laughing. "Maybe we can learn together" she nodded and pulled her on to the floor.

The two shuffled around the floor awkwardly for about 5 minutes.

Then she kissed him.

Mike was so taken aback he forgot to return the kiss. It didn't even feel right. It felt like kissing a mannequin. It wasn't like last time, when he practically saw sparks fly. It just wasn't the same.

Will saw everything. It took everything in him not to burst into tears then and there. He raced outside, hardly apologising to the girl he was dancing with, blinded by tears. He saw his mum with Chief Hopper by the car.

"I want to go" he choked out. "I have to go".

His mum looked up abruptly. "Sweetie what's wrong?" Will shook his head, tears pouring down his cheeks. It was all just too much. "Now."

Eleven pulled away, concerned. "Mike?" She asked softly, but Mike was distracted. He'd just spotted Will running, desperately towards the door, and was sure he saw tears rolling down his cheeks. He had to find out if he was ok.

He sprinted after him. "Will?" He called, but his voice was lost under the music. "WILL!" He practically bellowed. He burst outside only to see Mrs Byer's car turning the corner. Sighing, he sat on the steps in defeat.

He looked up to see Hopper stood in the car park, holding a still lit cigarette. That's when he remembered that El had come especially to see him, and he'd just left her, without even telling her why. He didn't know who he felt worse about.

He stood up, hanging his head, and turned around to go back inside, almost walking smack bang into El herself.

"Mike?" She asked again, worried. "I'm sorry"

"What?"

Then it hit him. He kissed her, he didn't kiss back, and then he'd just run out. She thought she'd done something wrong. He often forgot about her traumatic past, where she was made to believe everything was her fault. He felt like kicking himself.

"No, no, El don't apologise, you've done nothing wrong" he said, trying to reassure her. "It's me"

"Don't you love me anymore?" She asked. This took Mike by surprise, it was so sudden. It made sense for her to ask it though, considering his actions. He couldn't lie to her.

"Of course I do, El. I love you as a friend" he sighed. "I don't know what happened" he admitted. "I just don't like you like that anymore, and you deserve someone who truly, loves you"

She nodded, a tear trekking down her cheek. Mike reached out and wiped it away.

"Hey" he said softly. "You haven't done anything wrong" he said again. "There are so many people who care about you, ok? So many. Including me" He smiled. "Now you get in there and enjoy that dance."

He looked down the road worriedly. "I'd dance with you, but I've

gotta find Will" She nodded, smiling ever so slightly. He hugged, her, then set off at a sprint down the road, refusing to slow down until he got to Will's.

He arrived at Will's a sweaty mess, pounding on the door. Joyce answered concerned.

"Where's Will? WHERE IS HE?" Mike asked, more aggressively than he meant to sound.

Joyce, of course, was rather taken aback.

"He's not great, Mike, he ran out crying, he won't even tell me what's wrong, I think its best to leave it".

"I need to see him, Mrs Byers, I'm sorry" he said, pushing past her, running to Wills room and flinging the door open.

He immediately spotted Will's small frame sitting on the end of his bed. Mike sat next to him gently and Wills head shot up to look at him.

"What the hell are you doing here?" He said, almost bitterly.

"Why aren't you with your perfect superhero girlfriend?".

Mike was confused, why was Will suddenly so spiteful? He ought to at least tell Will the truth, he thought.

"I don't feel the same about her, Will, not anymore." He explained, still a little perplexed as to why Will was so upset.

Suddenly it all made perfect sense. The hurt in Will's eyes every time he mentioned El. The way he completely lost it when Mike told Will that he'd kissed her. The way that Will only ever called Mike after he'd had a nightmare. Never Dustin or Lucas; not even his mum.

Will Byers was in love with him, and he was in love with Will Byers.

"It's always been you, Will" he whispered, before kissing him gently.

It was only brief, and a little clumsy, but it meant everything. Will

looked at Mike, and Mike looked at Will, and suddenly Will was crying for a completely different reason. At that moment, Will Byers finally felt truly content. And this time, it lasted longer than just a moment.